

## **Congresswoman announces LNG opposition**

**At a Saturday anti-LNG rally in Oxnard, Rep. Lois Capps said not enough answers have been given to concerns about a liquefied natural gas terminal proposed for off the coast of Malibu.**

**By Hans Laetz / Special to The Malibu Times  
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A member of Congress said she has "waited long enough for answers" to safety, pollution and operational questions over two proposed liquefied natural gas terminals near Malibu and Oxnard, and has decided to oppose the projects.

Rep. Lois Capps, D-Santa Barbara, announced her opposition Saturday before more than 100 Oxnard residents who turned out at the first Southern California anti-LNG rally in decades.

Capps singled out Australian mining conglomerate BHP Billiton's proposed LNG depot near Malibu, and said BHPB is unable to provide answers about specific threats from possible terrorist attacks, sub-sea earthquakes, and tsunamis and ship collisions.

BHPB's Cabrillo Port LNG terminal would float 13.8 miles off the Malibu coast. Coastal activists say it is unsafe and will introduce hundreds of tons of smog-causing chemicals into clean ocean air; proponents say its remote site makes it the safest place to put a needed energy resource. Another LNG terminal is proposed for an unused oil platform near Oxnard.

In a post-rally interview, Capps pointed to recent natural disasters on the Gulf Coast.

"We have big storms on this coast too, and earthquakes," she said. "We don't want to set ourselves up for that kind of a disaster."

Capps' speech came the same day that Louisiana crews worked to assess the failure of two major natural gas pipelines at a natural gas terminal and pumping plant called the Henry Hub, which took a direct hit from Hurricane Rita.

Until Saturday, Capps had been publicly neutral about the LNG terminals. Her questions last year about seismic safety prompted the U.S. Geologic Survey to say the BHPB Malibu project faces risks from three undersea earthquake faults near Point Mugu, any of which could trigger a 6.5 magnitude earthquake.

Federal safety and environmental review of the project was put on hold nine months ago to allow BHPB to conduct seismic research and answer more than 120 other federal questions. BHPB has yet to supply answers to those queries.

But the congresswoman said that time has seen an "unrelentless, multimillion dollar" BHPB marketing and lobbying effort to sway voters and state and federal officials.

"They're pushing, so we have to start pushing back," Capps said.

"The energy company may feel that Port Cabrillo is safe, but how do they know?" she asked about 125 rally goers in Oxnard Saturday. "There has never been a floating LNG terminal anywhere in the world."

The rally, organized by a coalition of coastal advocacy groups, attracted numerous civic officials from Ventura County cities. They criticized BHPB and the sponsors of a second plant, Crystal Energy, for proposing to place high-pressure gas lines through poor and predominately-Hispanic neighborhoods near Oxnard.

"There are two mobile home parks where children live along this proposed pipeline route," said Port Hueneme city Councilwoman Maricela Morales. "The ship's 187 tons (per year) of nitrous oxides would become the number one polluter in Ventura County, and it would be in Hispanic Oxnard."

Dennis O'Leary, an Oxnard School Board member, noted that two proposed high-pressure gas lines could intersect "at the corner in front of St. John's Hospital [in Oxnard]. Do you think FEMA will be coming in to help us?"

An employee of a pro-LNG industry group stood near the rally and distributed a statement by an Oxnard Chamber of Commercial official who enthusiastically endorsed the project.

"LNG opponents focus on fantastic scenarios which have no connection to the fact that in 45 years of use, LNG has seen 33,000 carrier voyages covering 60 million miles around the globe without a major incident," said Oxnard Chamber of Commerce President Nancy Lindholm in a statement distributed by the LNG lobbyist.

"It is unfortunate," Lindholm's statement continued, "that some are spreading misleading information that they hope will keep us from increasing our supply with imports of LNG."

The anti-LNG rally came a week after a San Francisco organization called Pacific Environment sent nearly 25,000 anti-LNG mailers to selected voters along the coast between Santa Barbara and Santa Monica.

That \$21,000 project featured a beaming picture of Pacific Palisades resident Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger under a banner headline charging "he took over a million dollars from the LNG industry" in campaign contributions.

Pacific Environment spokesman Rory Cox said the mailing was sent to "progressive-leaning households" along the coast in an effort to let them know about the issue. "We've got to get people to start calling the governor's office, to let the governor know we are watching what his decision will be," Cox said.

Malibu Mayor Andy Stern termed the mailer "terrific."

"It should really wake people up," he said.